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ECHOES FROM EDEN

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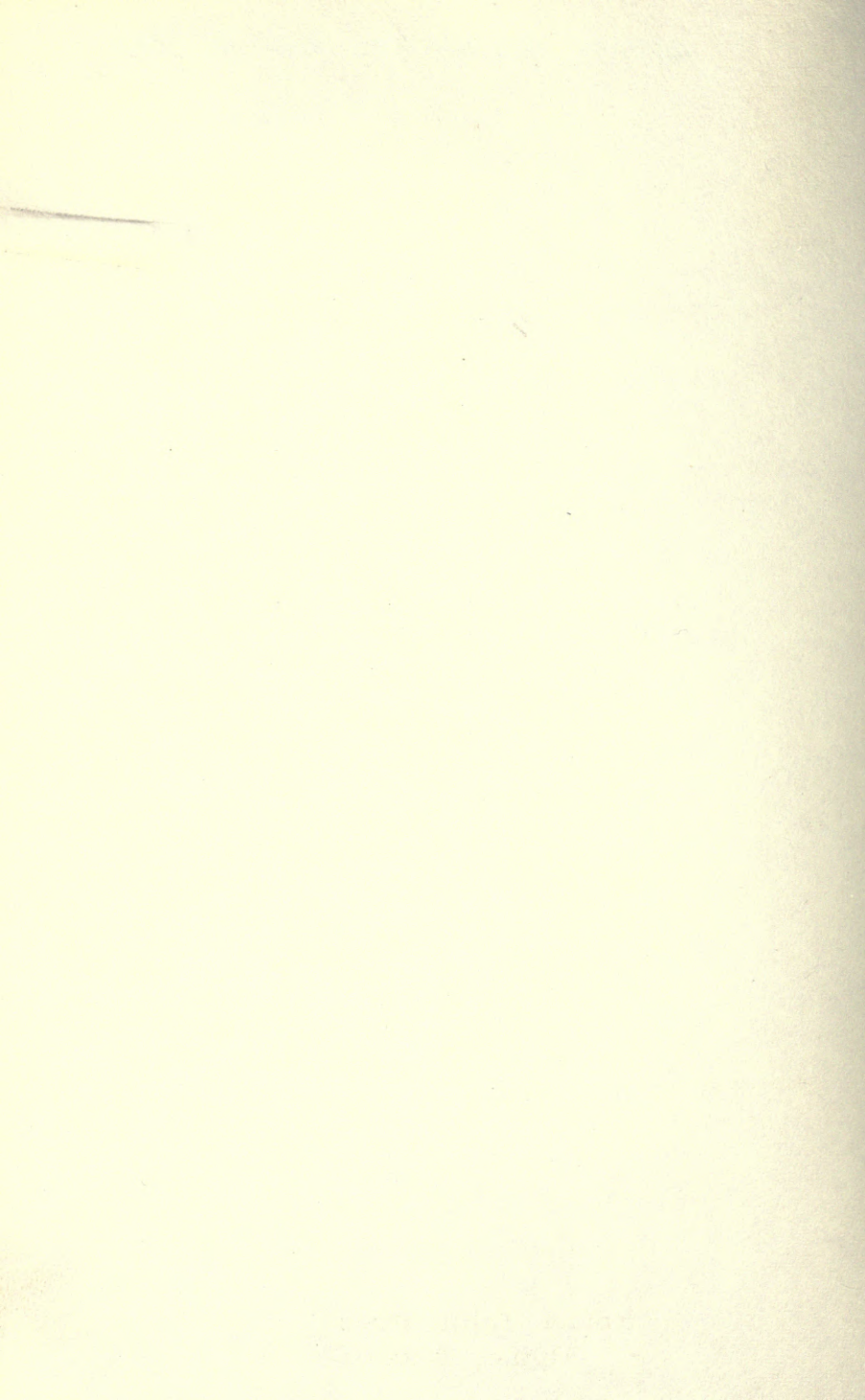
Alberta Babcock

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ECHOES FROM EDEN

By

Alberta Babcock

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ECHOES FROM EDEN

He called into Eden
Strange echoes returned---
His unearthly song not
Alone in me burned.

The words all have faded---
That Ghost-haunted Song
Lures me like magnets
To where I belong.

Echoes from Eden---
No thistles or labor,
Apples for Adam and
Figs for the neighbor.

Welcome the Ghost and
The stranger that sings
And the echo from Eden
The perfume it brings.

LIKE A FLUTED SONG

In the moon-swept purple skies
A woman, moves with sapphire eyes
Through the dark, a thing of ice.

She steps on stars (the strange hours pass)
They make the music of broken glass
As they fall in the void, resound and crash.

Still and thin like a fluted song,
Icicles tinkle and jingle along,
She moves where wondrous things belong.

She stirs great tempests blowing over--
Her long, blue veils the storm clouds cover--
She sweeps the skies for a phantom lover---

The swell of music -- a deafening roar -
Beats on the souls frail shell like shore -
The Queen of the Arts has passed once more.

FIRE

We are buried in the sky
Dig us up and let us die
Lay us out like colored skeins
Paint with fire our hearts and brains.

Restless in our lofty grave
This vast, eternal, endless cave
Yields us but a lonely light
Winter, iron and clay and night.

If you have tasted brighter bread
Dined on fire where angels fed
The sweets that mortal greed pursues
You cannot find, you cannot lose-
Sad bewildered sky-bound ghost
Fire is banquet, Fire is Host.

EXISTENTIALIST PRAYER

Tear, tear from the heart of me
The snake coiled roots of this naked tree---
The fractured moments like broken crocks
That spill my life on the hungry rocks---

Tear, tear from my living mind
All that is dying and silent and blind,
The twisted hands and mouths of fate---
The armies that winnow the cities of hate.

Plant in me harvests and tear out the weeds
Bind up the wonderful wound as it bleeds.
Tear the temporal discords away---
The thieves in the coils of my mortal day.

VOICE OF THE PUBLIC STATUE

I met Medusa and
 Turned to stone.
By all about it is well known,
 (If you prefer
I thus abide)
 Enjoying being petrified.

It is a cool longevity
 Better than fleshy brevity.
I will survey this whole domain
 When you no longer here remain.

All of your ecstasy and pain
 Will pass with summer sun and rain.
My destiny? to stand alone.
 Immutable eternal stone.

THE PROMISE AND THE DREAM

What became of all the youthful froth?
Is it worth the promise and the dream?

What virgin Spring gave bluntly, seemed so gay----
Then the death of Winter froze the stream-----

The razor edge of Autumn cut it through---
(The wealth of youth the four-eyed-girl-boy knew)----
The poles of North and South, the moon-drawn-
truth---

Hitched to a tantalizing, bursting team.

Above sea-gardens, gulls and chiming clouds
Far from blood-berried earth and still-born dream----

Is the mark upon their foreheads spinning
From the end, or cause to a beginning?

EBBING LOVE

He calls with diamond voice the river,
Hangs the earth with alien ice,
Builds an avalanche of cloud banks---
Autumn's dream and echo dies.
Death comes by on silver skates,
Chasing folk in fur and feather.
Time to feed that thin blue flame
Of love against the winter weather.

RESIDUE

Shiva with her myriad crayons writes
Her manuscripts upon the days and nights.
Her lightening draws
Blue jagged jaws
That frighten herds of dragons into flight.

While here between my brows, around my waist,
Her Plowman carves indelibly,
What will not be erased.
How can I catch the love notes now, with wings,
Over the wall white butterflies, she flings,
That flutter off before a word is read.
My grass-roots scrawl in earth a prayer for bread.

IN THE LAST ANALYSIS THERE IS NO LOGICIAN
LIKE THE RAPT SAINT

Love is like a wild thing
Hiding in the wood,
At slightest sign of noise or knives
It vanishes for good.

But let the hunter kneel in prayer
The forests teem with friendly faces,
Love is like the warm, wild things
In leafy, secret hiding places.

DARK LAND OF EVIL DREAMS

Mysteries were stirring out in the briny deep
The children in the town were restless in their sleep
Silence turned to bedlam and the barking, howling night
Aroused men to their windows--but darkness met their
sight.

No one saw the legions with their burning, glowing eyes
March from the depths, and dripping, out of the sea
arise!

From the cold depth of Science untouched by the golden
sun

From a loveless age of darkened hearts these ugly
phantoms run.

They spread their sulphurous poisons abroad through
the little town

Like zombie armies they return to the dark sea,
sinking down.

Bad dreams will plague all mankind, for, none with
second sight

Can find nor put these demons, dismembered into flight
The mysteries that stir about the briny floor of thought
Throw up dark monstrous forms that stalk the world
of night,
unsought.

THE WATERFALL

I gazed upon the waterfall
And felt my soul go forth
(But not in Spring and not in Fall
And not from South or North)
Then I saw it wished to lie
Upon the blue reflected sky
And veer with cloud and dance with sun
Where death and dreams like fishes run--
Just then the magic of the stream
Chained me like a silver dream -
Around my limbs, about my face
Wound waters murmuring prayers of grace
Upon life's flowing dream I feast
Cascading like a bridal veil---
(But not from West nor yet from East
Or Summer sun or Winter hail).
But from a region with no name
From where love goes from where love came--
As in the water-mirrored sky
Behind our eyes enchantments lie.

OPHELIA

Suddenly I feel the sea---
Not out there but here in me,
Stone illusions wear away,
In shallows of reality.

Too tired to meet the roaring spray
I drown a little every day---
But try to swim and float and care
I cannot go--or wish to stay.

The water deepens, darkens, drags,
Life monotonously lags---
Lethean currents wind my hair
On tangled, hidden weeds and crags.

FROM THE WATERS OF THE WORLD

You are Narcissus risen from Greece

I have seen the turn of your golden shoulder
Before in my dreams ----

From the waters of the world
Your own face glitters up to you ----

Your lips part, your hands reach out ----
You call to the wavering, sparkling self that is
A reflection never to be caught ----

Night falls upon the waters, myths, and men
Grow blurred --- within its darkening depths
The stars of Heaven point their lights
Where one brief day ago your face,
Cried for the empty image there.

UNBOUND

Over the ragged line of distant earths,
Hangs, high, the architectural blue of space,
Full of tall furniture that floats in time
Suns, clouds and comets, frictionless,
As Magic Spells, returning Springtime casts,
Buds, are her delicate fairytales, unfolding
Perfumes, liberally to scatter far and wide
Over the burning towns and countless graves.
Earths flutter by us like bright autumn leaves,
We ride on our own star forgetful, quite,
Of the motion, motionless paradox
Dancing like small worlds in mirror-highlights
On innumerable bubbles, children blow,
Only to watch them burst like fragile time.

VOICE OF PEGASUS

I will not suffer harness
Nor halter on my neck
I will not let their burdens,
My sky-born swiftness check.

I will not plod their cold dark earth
My heart, my wing, my hoof
Were made to cleave the clouds above,
My realms remain aloof.

For if I tarry once too long
Upon your sodden earth--
They'll chain me there and say I am
A myth and have no worth.

LIKE BROKEN GLASS

We heard their anger curling down the world,
Stars fell with many sounds like broken glass
Down pits of moonless night their anger hurled
Into new graves, the broken dreams to pass.

But through the opening eyelids of the dawn
A spear of sunlight pierced the prison gloom.
The maze of years converged and focused on
The shadow of a cross - an empty tomb.

Our sleeping, selfless dreams, twice born, awake,
Rise from their graves and jails and resurrections,
Above the shrouds and shibboleths, His Peace
With everlasting brooding wings protects.

NOW IS FOREVER

I went to the store with my dollar and found
No bread, and the place was burned to the ground.
Then I inquired when it all burned down
And they said, "Do you mean the store or the town?"
I said, "Well, the store, I mean, I guess,"
They eyed me strangely and answered, "Yes,"
"The store burned down ten years ago,
And the town, in five will burn you know."
I thanked them kindly and hurriedly said,
"Where am I?" they answered, "The town of the dead."
"And if you will turn on the road marked 'Past'
You will come to the store that burned at last,
And you will be able to buy your bread
On that road marked 'Future' up ahead."

WHO MOURNS FOR BELLS IN EDEN

Who mourns the sweet mad music Eve betrayed,
Bequeathing silence now to Eden's brides--?

The winding cracks creep slowly over towers
That house the trembling bells that ring no more;
Like poison tendrils crawling through the night
Live crevasses that move through darkened earth--

Man's groping fingers feel for crumbling truth
And rusting faith; the wood gone hollow from
The termites of the mind; This giant shell
Shall feel the agebound Phoenix break its walls
And shatter with a burning birth the bells.

Silence has no temple roof, no dream--!
Beneath the shade of wings like licking flames--
But music could have made a living hour
Of wordless song, of labor and of love;
And blown upon the Holy Tree a flower,
White as a cloud to shield Humanity--
Who mourns for Bells in Eden grieves for three.

SMALLER THAN A MUSTARD SEED

Milleniums have melted,
Dropped from the cliff of time,
A murderous miasma
Of tears and blood and grime.

But essences were simmering
Within that witches' brew
That formed the crystal, formed the seed
Of prophet-promised "New. "

It was so small they knew it not,
Atomic in its size--
The drop of poison in the drink--
That demons blindly prize.

CROWN OF PAIN

When first I courted Beauty
How she eluded me
Silence met my deepest sigh
Indifference, bended knee!

Then through heavy, sleepy days,
I knew she heard my prayer
For, life gave a new child to us
With flying golden hair.

There in Time this wondrous thing
In me quiescent, hidden,
Waited for Love's great stone step
At beauty's house, forbidden.

If your wish is granted
And Beauty turns your slave
She adorns the bed of birth
And triumphs past the grave.

THE PATIENT ONE

It is God they hunger for
Silent in the market place
Alas they buy amiss their
Glitter-bobs and lace--

Opaque eyes like children's, litten
By the playthings scattered there--
Through pageantry and carnival,
Circus, show and fair!

They buy so dear and sell so cheap,
The moments running through the glass--
He waits with lowered mist veiled eyes
On every corner that they pass.

THE OTHER HALF

The smell of sanctity we sample
 Sunday at church (for an example)
Has its own peculiar flavor,
 Wrapped in priestly prim behavior.

While taverns' wine-stale-halitosis
 Taken wisely in small doses,
Its own low sanctities exude
 Convivial, though peasant-rude.

Did you ever smell a tavern?
 Did you ever smell a church?
Which lulls the mind, and stays the heart?
 Which makes the cortex lurch?

Do you prefer the odor
 Of a singing congregation
Or tankard dregs that stimulate
 A spiral conversation?

UNITY

In tangled jungles of the soul
 Something in us stalks its prey,
Something flies on vulture wings
 Above dead dreams of yesterday.
Past the farthest star in sight
 Something scans the whole night sky,
Divinity dwells in us all
 How can we ever die?
Something in us knows the shrine
 In every garden of the earth,
Circles with the shining sun,
 Resurrects with every birth.
A child within is always gay,
 And also in us something weeps,
Something always is awake----
 Yet a sleeping beauty sleeps.
The flowering paradises grow
 Where desert wildernesses dwell,
We are a whirling universe,
 Hosts to heaven and to hell.

A MANGER, A DOOR, A KEY

How many times have I passed by
The humble stable door
As soft light flows from under it
Where Magi, Him, adore.

Upon a gate, unseen, within
The knocking I have heard--
But door bells of the busy world
My reaching hand deterred.

Deep in my pocketbook I guard
All jealously the key--
That opens these and other doors
When I, reborn, am free.

HYMN TO IMANUEL

God came to me on a big white horse
And blue and gold His pennants
How cosmic bright His stable door
With starry earths for tenants.
Great hoofs struck lightening from His path
While myriad earths adoring
Blew blossoming winds about His mane,
Kept Love-Song-circles pouring
To cast the immemorial Spell
First and Last, Imanuel.

He traveled lightly from afar
(Oh warm life riding through me)
Beloved, as the Traveler passed
His flaming eyes--they knew me!
And as he tracked the Milky Way
Upon His Wonder Steed,
I saw the Star of Bethlehem
Rise, again and lead.
Then, radiant light, grown faint and far
Too soon dropped out of sight
A singing throng with ancient song
Possessed all time that night
Like falling stars their echoes fell
"Immanuel -- Imanuel!"

WINDOWS TO THE LOVER

And so have I
The X-ray eye
And though I'm buried deep
I see the flowers above me grow
In my mysterious sleep.

I dwell now in the darker realm
But hold the temple stones
That hold the walls that hold the spires
Deep-rooted in my bones. .

Some men think
This darker drink
This world of moving people
Grows as high as the tree swept sky
Or the cross on the temple steeple.

You may live under or over the sea
Or over or under the cloud
But bloomless gardens there will be
And silence for a shroud.

Unless you know the living heart, the living eye and ear
Beauty seems but ugliness and love will be but fear,
This world is but a door, the grave is but another
The kings and flowers upon your path
Are windows to the lover.

THE DIVINE MISER

With unveiled eyes turned in, the naked soul
Feeds on a starving food; stale drudgery--
The mops and brooms and dishpans "Daily News"
Lean passion (sitting on the kitchen stool)
Speaks hunger for lost Venus, minstrels, ruins--
Fear humming what or where to do, or go?
Another presence whispers, "Martha--Mary!"
Or "War between the temporal and eternal."

At last they hear the quiet footsteps come--
In legions to the Islands of Decision
Where there will be that "Something Glory Clad"
That offers pens and brushes, drums and says--
"Mary choose the better part. Please take
This little bowl to catch the wasted blood."

TENANTS OF DELINQUENCY

We are made of music, fire, design--

(Our flames make burning butterflies, then die)

We sat in little school room desks and learned

The ABC's of ashes, old cocoons--

And watched Spring's sighing with a winged sound,

Come through the window, Winter closed that fall,

As he threw, spendthrift, wakening and young loves--

And no one spoke of God or Art or Peace

(Fly inward out of sight, dead poets, too)

Then came the stir of headlines big and black

Limm fire upon the deep, dark walls of night,

And marching men and girls in overalls,

As cities, one by one snuffed out their lights.

Now our children sit at little desks

And no one mentions all the same old things--

Who will tell our children's children Life--

Wanders lonely through her vineyard now

Afraid her trampled grapes are growing wild!

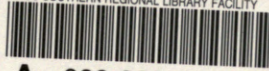
THE BRIGHTEST SHROUD

I shall weave a bright flowered shroud
That will sing to them after I die.
I want to be covered with rhymes and songs
On my journey into the sky.

I'll trade you a cold hard ruby
For a tender warmth or verse
We'll see whose jewel-box is fullest
After the ride in the hearse.

We'll see whose coat is the brightest
Whose song is the rich one or gay--
We'll see in the Queen of Cities
That love alone will pay.

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